

EXHIBIT

DATE

HB

17

1/29/15

268

House Bill 268
January 29, 2015
Presented by Jeff Hagener
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Jeff Hagener, Director of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). I am here today in support of House Bill 268, as it provides new revenue for hunting access enhancement – a very important issue for the Department, hunters, and landowners. Ultimately this bill, if moved forward, will need to be reconciled with HB 269, if also moved forward, since they contradict each other. HB 268 eliminates the hunting access fee and replaces it with a \$25 Block Management Stamp, whereas HB 269 increases the resident hunting access fee as a way to generate more revenue. FWP is supportive of the concept embodied in both bills – additional revenue for a high priority hunting access enhancement program.

The \$25 block management stamp is estimated to result in a net increase of \$567,667 in additional revenue available to the existing \$7+ million Hunting Access Enhancement Program. As new revenue has become available to the program over the past 20 years, FWP has tried to balance the use of the funds by enrolling new landowners and adding acres and opportunities, while also increasing services and payments provided to existing cooperators. Additionally, we have improved program administration through services like better maps and hunting access guides, more durable signs, and contracted reservation services.

FWP supports this bill because it does provide significant additional revenue for an issue that is very important to Montana hunters – public hunting access. And because the revenue is “new” funding, it does not come at the expense of funding for other important FWP programs, which was the concern we expressed with HB 146.

With that said, it is important to note that FWP’s support of this bill, and the new revenue it generates, is based on the premise that it does not impact the revenue increase requested through HB 140. The Department wants to make it clear that support for the increase proposed by this bill is based on it being additive to HB 140, and not a substitute for funding proposals contained in HB 140.

In conclusion, FWP supports the concept of this and other hunting access enhancement bills that propose more resources for hunting access, which nearly everyone agrees is a high priority.

HB 268
Hagener
19

TABULATION OF BLOCK MANAGEMENT STAMP COMMMENTS

Yes to the Concept:

29 from MSA emails (81%)
 21 from OYOA blog (84%)
 Overall 82%
 (61 total responses)

No to the Concept:

7 from MSA emails (19%)
 4 from OYOA blog (16%)
 Overall 18%

Yes to the \$25 fee:

19 from MSA emails (73%)
 4 from OYOA blog (57%)
 Overall (70%)

No to the \$25 fee:

7 from MSA emails (27%)
 3? From OYOA blog (43%)
 (29%)

Youths free

8 from MSA emails

Youths to pay reduced fee

11 from MSA emails

Where funds should go:

Block Management:

15 from MSA emails
 8 from OYOA blog

Note:

There were at least 25 non-specific replies that are not included in the above tabulations. In many instances, people did not respond to all 4 questions. There may be a few instances where people replied by email and also commented on the blog. Many comments on the OYOA blog were in the form of ongoing discussions between several individuals.

MSA emails were sent out to over 330 people that are almost 100% residents of Montana. Those receiving the emails were asked to share with their individual databases as well.

HB 268
 Q6 9/10/10
 (16)

